

PRACTICE BASED OUTPUTS

REF 2021

Combined Outputs Portfolio Submission & Additional Information:

Compound 13 Lab: Rethinking Waste and the Politics of Disposability Professor Graham Jeffery

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RESEARCH OUTPUT 1 -MATERIALS OF HOPE (2018) 1. Academy

This 18 minute documentary was produced collaboratively

between a team of UK-based researchers and members of ACORN India, using participatory methods.

It tells the story of the journeys that waste materials make through the informal

recycling industry in Dharavi, Mumbai. It was produced as part of

a follow-on project for impact and engagement, Resources of

Hope, funded by AHRC through the Global Challenges Research

Fund (GCRF).

The film's soundtrack was collaboratively composed by Graham Jeffery with members of ACORN,

using audio recycled and reclaimed from the urban soundscape of the 13th Compound. Jeffery was

responsible for the location recording and sound design and co-produced and co-edited the film

with Dr Ben Parry. The film is intended to provoke debate about the 'story of waste',

challenging received notions of disposable products, materials and people, reflecting on labour,

urban inequalities and the 'biopolitics of disposability'.

The film was selected for screening at international festivals including the ET4U Meetings

Festival, Denmark as well as at GCRF conferences in London and Mumbai. It also acts as an

introduction to the ongoing work of Compound 13 Lab.

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RESEARCH OUTPUT 2 -WASTE WORK: THE ART OF SURVIVAL IN DHARAVI (2020) 1. Academy

Jeffery and Parry have co-edited a publication which draws together the findings from the work

of Compound 13 Lab to date, published by Wunderkammer Press. It includes contributions from the

team of artists involved in the residency programme, reflections on methods and approaches used,

and broader engagement with the complex urban politics of Dharavi's informal settlement.

Two peer-reviewed chapters co-authored by Jeffery are included in this portfolio:

Chapter 2: Waste. work and the politics of knowledge This chapter, drawing on epistemologies of

the South, provides an interdisciplinary conceptual framework that draws together the knowledge

politics of waste work, action research and biopolitical theories of value and disposability,

applied to the material and social contexts of Dharavi's 13th Compound.

Chapter 5: Pedagogies of the Periphery: City as classroom This chapter provides a reflective

account of the residency process, drawing on interviews with young artists and exploring the

politics of class, caste and gender in shaping and framing learning experiences in and through

arts and media at Compound 13 Lab.

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RESEARCH OUTPUT 3 -C13 LAB RESIDENCY PROGRAMME (2018 -2020) uws Academy

From 2018 -2020, an ambitious programme of artist residencies in Dharavi was jointly curated and produced by Prof Graham Jeffery and Dr Ben Parry (Bath Spa University). These residencies were designed as 'live interventions' to collaboratively generate rich data about the politics and material culture of Dharavi's recycling industry, building on methods developed as part of the AHRC's Connected Communities programme and Parry/Jeffery's prior work in interventionist public art. They were a central practice-based research activity of the AHRC/GCRF funded project: 'Rethinking Waste and the Logics of Disposability'. They were methodologically innovative, using arts and cultural practices as a platform to generate new knowledge and uncover hidden stories from Dharavi's 13th Compound.

Five established professional artists, four from India and one from the UK were commissioned to undertake work in Dharavi alongside a programme of training and development for young artists (described in Chapter 6 of Waste Work, included in this portfolio). Parry/Jeffery co-curated a further series of activities as part of their own contribution to the programme, including work in sonic urbanism and the Plastic Mahal project, selected for The New School/University of Melbourne's Project Anywhere.

Artists: Mrugan Rathod, Ian Dawson, Aquí Thami Sharmila Samant, Akhila Krishnan

Two examples of documentation of the completed residency process are included in this portfolio: the rest can be found on the Compound 13 Lab website.

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OUTPUT 3: Residency Programme: Aquí Thami 1JWS Academy

Precious pays tribute to the stories and sacrifices made by women in Dharavi. Thami writes:

"While attempting to respond to stories that are sidelined and forgotten it becomes imperative to bring in a feminist lens to understand why we know what we know and why we forget what we forget, what is valuable and what is not."

Young women from Dharavi gathered stories of long-lost pieces of jewellery from their mothers and grandmothers. These jewels were drawn and recreated from oral histories and in some cases, photographs, and then turned into 3D models made of recycled plastic. The jewel boxes contained a memory drive and headphone socket where the stories of the lost jewels were re-told.

These objects will now travel from Dharavi to be shared in other spaces -giving a voice to stories of memory, value and loss, and hidden histories of women's struggles with money. Many of the jewels were family heirlooms that had to be sold or pawned to feed families struggling with poverty and hunger.

Aquí produced an account of her residency as a chapter entitled 'Sharing Stories: Making Space' in Waste Work: the art of survival in Dharavi.

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OUTPUT 3: Residency Programme: Ian Dawson 1JWS Academy

<http://www.iandawsonstudia.com/compound-73-/a-b-residency.html>

Images showing how the work was disseminated

Ian Dawson is a UK-based sculptor and academic who works across the boundaries of material and digital cultures using plastic as a primary medium. His residency in Dharavi deployed 3D scanning technologies to make portraits with individual participants which were then printed in plastic, alongside extensive mapping and modelling of the workspaces and streets surrounding the Lab. Materials were gathered from the 'godowns' of the 13th Compound and with participants were moulded and transformed into new artefacts. The resultant digital and physical objects were then subjected to further processes of analysis and re-manufacturing.

Dawson provides a full account of the residency process in Chapter 9 of 'Waste Work': The Polymer Chain: plastic itineraries and plastic images in a sociomaterialist assemblage.

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CONTEXT 1JWS Academy

WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF ACADEMIC AND POLICY DISCOURSE

The outputs contained in this portfolio, taken together, represent an ongoing body of internationally significant live, socially and politically engaged research work which has been built up by Jeffery and Parry from a project originally conceived as part of Parry's PhD on Cultural Hijack, supervised at UWS between 2011 and 2015 by Prof Katarzyna Kosmala and Graham Jeffery.

The Rethinking Waste project confronts questions of waste, disposability and urban inclusions/exclusions through a residency programme which activates the lab as an experimental design and learning space. The Lab is embedded in an area of Mumbai that is one of the largest informal aggregations of (re)maker and (re)manufacturing spaces on the planet. Through a series of increasingly ambitious funded research programmes involving deep collaboration between ACORN India and an interdisciplinary team of Indian and UK based artist-researchers, the project has built scale and reach that has now led to the permanent establishment of a digital learning space in a purpose-built building in the heart of Dharavi.

From this space, which under conditions of COVID -19 is now required to operate virtually as well as physically, the project continues to break new ground in research. It brings an experimental and ethical approach to the generation of knowledge using a wide range of digital and physical tools, from smartphones, audiovisual technologies to 3D printing, plastic re-manufacturing and design.

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KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS LJWS Academy

1. How can digital media and creative learning shift public perceptions of the politics of human disposability, advocating for waste work of informal recyclers as essential and valued labour within wider systems of sustainable production?

2.
Can emerging tools/technologies of the circular economy, in the hands of informal waste workers who would not normally have access to them, improve their livelihoods as essential workers within the city's waste management infrastructure?

3.
What are the paradigms of smart city, emerging from a 'bottom-up' approach that reframes citizens living in marginalized communities as resourceful, knowledgeable and gifted?

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COMPOUND 13 LAB: METHODOLOGY LJWS Academy

Through a programme of workshops and residencies by artists, scientists, engineers and designers, C13 Lab shares emerging tools and technologies of the circular economy with those who would not normally have access to them, developing a learning and research environment that has the potential to improve their life chances. The project explores a paradigm of 'smart city' where the technologically advanced city emerges from below, rather than being centrally planned and implemented. In particular, participants are able to test and innovate with various technologies, exploring the ways in which plastics can be recycled, remanufactured and remade safely, reliably and creatively.

At the Lab, young people are placed at the centre of their own learning, to co-design a bespoke 'living curriculum' that responds to their issues, addresses their needs and aids their future goals. Ongoing activities at the lab include art and design classes, music workshops, training sessions, talks and film screenings and an ongoing programme of guest residencies,. Young people work alongside our artists on a variety of different projects, which advance through a process of co-creation, shared learning and co-authorship. These activities enable us to approach challenging issues through an assemblage of diverse knowledges, weaving together practices of participatory action research, imagining, experimenting and making, creative ideation and asking 'what if.. ?' At the heart of this approach are questions of power and agency, asking -Who has the right to the city? Whose voices are heard (or silenced) in processes of urban change and development? What practical tools and techniques might people who are the subjects of urban change be able to use to challenge their silencing and 'othering' by different constellations of powerful interests? How might expertise embedded in the circuits of the informal recycling sector be communicated and disseminated beyond Dharavi?

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CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD lJWS Academy

A series of workshops, live events, documentary films, publications and the project website, enables Cl3 Lab to engages with an international community of practice in development studies, urban planning, environmental humanities and ecological design. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic dissemination work has continued virtually, with recent international online events and workshops including a transnational seminar for MFA students and seminars with students from the University of Cambridge's MPhil in Arts, Creativities and Education and the School of Design, Carnegie Mellon University. A planned conference for April 2020 at GSA Foundation has been postponed until May 2021, when an international online symposium exploring the issues and processes raised by the residency programme will be undertaken. An impact report written by ACORN demonstrates that the project has upskilled over 100 young people and produced evidence that ACORN has been able to use in its campaigning and advocacy for policy change in relation to urban informality and waste work. A Technology Assessment Platform jointly developed with partner organisation

ETC Group is enabling Dharavi residents to voice their perspectives and concerns about the impact of digital technologies on their work and lives.

Key interdisciplinary themes, drawing on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, addressed by Compound 13 Lab include: City as classroom and innovation in lifelong learning: drawing on the material, social and embodied knowledges and experiences of the neighbourhood Human as waste: exploring the bio-political regimes of value that govern the lives of our participants Participatory interventionism: working in the space between art, architecture and activism, this describes a process of engaging artists, designers and communities together in processes of urbanization. Ecological futures and circular economy: considering how waste can be repurposed, revalued and reimagined to create new products, businesses and livelihoods now and in the cities of the future. Changing public perceptions of waste: alongside ACORN India's mission to represent the people of Dharavi as resourceful, valued and to be respected, our work enables and encourages wider publics to rethink and re-evaluate their attitudes to waste and disposability in its many forms.

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COMPOUND 13 LAB: DISSEMINATION and ongoing IMPACT lJWS Academy

The learning from the project is being shared with key industry and policy partners in India, notably Imaginarium Pty. and the Maharashtra Government, through our partnership with arts venue and urban lab GSA and Shiv Nadar University. In this way we influence policy thinking around the value of the informal circular economy, the importance of investment in learning/development for most deprived citizens, and the huge contribution to the health, economy and waste reduction practices of the city made by the workers of the informal recycling sector, despite its negative image and its challenging working conditions.

This in turn is feeding into a major new research project funded by the UK's Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) through the British Academy (2019 -2022), led by Jeffery, entitled Waste, Water and Wellbeing: lessons from the interface of formal/informal urban systems in Dharavi. As a piece of cutting-edge interdisciplinary research, this work is at the forefront of international collaborative and socially engaged research practice, bringing an interdisciplinary team of social scientists, engineers, artists, designers, environmental scientists and cultural practitioners into a direct dialogue with communities in Dharavi. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic the research team had to temporarily suspend fieldwork undertaken by researchers from outside Dharavi, but instead developed a virtual training and mentoring programme in documentary filmmaking. enabling ACORN staff to conduct interviews with families in Dharavi directly affected by the pandemic. These interviews informed Akhila Krishnan's virtual residency as well as providing data for ongoing publication and dissemination work, with ACORN's Vinod Shetty featuring prominently in international media reports about Dharavi's resilience in the face of the pandemic.

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